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C O N F I D E N T I A L SARAJEVO 001149

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STATE FOR EUR (DICARLO), EUR/SCE (ENGLISH, FOOKS, BELL), P
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SUBJECT: AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL SPURIOUSLY CLAIMS ILLEGAL
BOSNIAN ARMS SALES TO IRAQ

Classified By: Deputy Chief of Mission Tina Kaidanow for Reasons 1.4 (B
) and (D)

¶1. (C) Summary: On May 10, Amnesty International (AI) issued a report on the global arms trade. In the report, AI erroneously alleges that hundreds of thousands of small arms and light weapons (SA/LW) and associate ammunition were clandestinely shipped from Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) to Iraq and elsewhere via a series of questionable intermediaries. In line with the theme of the report, AI contends that the SA/LW, originally procured by the U.S. Defense Department via contractors, were shipped without proper public oversight. This is the latest in a long series of conspiracy theories circulating in the Balkan press on accusations of mishandled SA/LW transfers, primarily based on hearsay and gossip within the Sarajevo international community. In the case of the Iraq exports, the Bosnian government followed BiH and international procedures when issuing the export license and, at least on the Bosnian side, the exports were conducted according to established operating procedures. Working with the European Union Force (EUFOR) and NATO Headquarters, as well as the Bosnian Ministries of Defense (MOD) and Foreign Trade and Economic Relations (MOFTER), the Embassy and other relevant players have coordinated responses to press inquiries that acknowledge the legal procurement of SA/LW from BiH and stress that all the relevant players followed established BiH and international procedures. End Summary.

¶2. (C) Amnesty International's May 10 report entitled "Dead on Time - arms transportation, brokering, and the threat to human rights" includes several allegations of clandestine U.S.-instigated SA/LW exports from Bosnia to international trouble spots including Iraq between July 31, 2004 to June 31, 2005. The report asserts that the SA/LW left BiH without "proper public oversight" and challenges whether the weapons remained in Iraq. While shipments of SA/LW from BiH to Iraq did occur, AI's claims of mismanagement are totally unfounded and unsubstantiated. The Bosnian Government abided by the proper procedures for arms exports and EUFOR issued the appropriate forms to transport the weapons, as they would for any legitimate SA/LW sale.

¶3. (C) To fill DOD-sponsored contracts in support of Coalition efforts in Iraq, several U.S., Canadian, and other international companies procured weapons through regional intermediaries from 2004 to 2005. In BiH, a majority of the contracts were for surplus military weapons purchased from the entities. The BiH MOD's July 2004 moratorium on the

sale of surplus SA/LW held buyers to a series of regulated procedures and deadlines. Due to bureaucratic delays, the MOD repeatedly pushed back the timeline, contributing to the false public perception of questionable oversight. The issue was further complicated by local reports of SA/LW being shipped to China. In actuality, a Canadian company named Chyna held one of the contracts to provide SA/LW to Iraq. Despite all the confusion, MOFTER issued the export licenses based on legitimate end-user certificates and followed BiH and international regulations regarding the export of weapons.

14. (C) Comment: Regrettably, AI appears to have cherry-picked sensational reports that have bounced around the Balkans press for the last year. Furthermore, EUFOR, OSCE, and the Office of the High Representative (OHR) all claim that AI never approached them to confirm any of the information. The allegations of mishandling most likely originated among members of the international community based on speculation regarding several U.S.-BiH bilateral programs.

The Embassy is working with EUFOR and NATO HQ, as well as the BiH MOD and MOFTER, to guarantee that the BiH media has subsequently received a clear, factual, and unified message that the sale of SA/LW was both legitimate commerce and undertaken in accordance with established procedures. End Comment.

MCELHANEY